

ENGLANDS

PETITION

To **THEIR**

KING.

An humble *Petition* of the distressed and
most distressed Subjects of **ENGLAND**

To **THEIR** most Excellent Majesty,

Containing (in the judgement of the wise) the
very sense of all the true-hearted of the Kingdom

but because the way to the Kings Court is long, and far
to London, and there printed, as it is

Printed on the day of **John** Trouble, and
way (in hope) for his deliverance out of

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To the obvious not desired Reader.

GOOD Friend, We would have you know
this Petition was intended onely for his
Majesties view, but because plain dea-
ling is seldome well taken, and his Ma-
jestie so guarded from the Requests of his Subjects, we
are therefore forced to submit it to your common view,
and to turne it out, in hope his Majesty may light of
one Copie, and seriously reade it and lay to heart the dis-
tresse of the miserable, if you censure it as the worke of
some few discontented persons, Know you it is the sense
of our part of the Kingdom, and if you will promise us
freedome and hopes of successe, we'll soon returne it you
with the hands of 1000000. If you condemne us for
speaking too plainly, Know that misery makes men for-
get good manners, and dying men use not complements;
We are in the case of the Lepers, If we sit still we pe-
rish, therefore we will move in the way of hope, and goe
to the King, though it be not according to Law, and
perish with me, perish the Kingdom, we will come furre
the plainnesse of better persons and times,
King. 18. 18. &c. &c. &c.

To the Kings most Excellent Majesty

The humble Petition of Your distressed and almost
desper'd Subjects of Your Kingdoms of England,

READ SOVERAIGNE, Its a double grief to
our soules, that we should be constrained to beg for
our lives at Your hands, who are bound by the Law
of God and nature, and by Your Oath, to protect
them, and that we should be forced to entreat You
to spare our estates, liberties, and blood, whose ho-
nour and strength depends so much on these our enjoyments: But
extremity prevaileth and drives us to You, and casteth us here pre-
sented at the feet of Your Majesty: And let not Your Majesty be of-
fended if we speake more plainly then usually becometh us, for ne-
cessitie hath no law: It is for our lives and more, and therefore blame
as not to speake Your friends, our wives, our children, our wants, our
dangers, our Countrey, our blood, do all pierce our eyes and hearts
with their daily & dolefull cries: Oh that our requests could finde
as quick access to Yours! Surely its impossible Your Majesty should
be ignorant of the dolefull condition Your two Kingdomes are in:
Doe You not know that our houses are plundered, and the fruit of
our long labours taken from us, that men who have heretofore re-
lieved hundreds of the poore, have not left them a bed to lye on,
food to sustain them, or a house to put their heads in: And the poore
they were wont to relieve, are forced to become Souldiers, that they
may rob us by authority. Know You not how many thousand dis-
tressed soules cry to God day & night, in their anguish and misery,
while they see You the Father of their Countrey, having no com-
passion on them? Oh! where is now Your Majesties ancient cha-
rity? You were wont if we lost our estates by Pyrates, or
house by fire, to grant Your gracions Letters Patents, to
relieve us, but now Your Souldiers rob us of all, and blame our

the ground, and this not onely for obtaining victory in heat of fight, but upon deliberation afterwards, as they did at *Brimingham* in *Warwickshire* by neere hundred houses the next day when they left the Towne. You were wont to relieve Your Subjects when taken by Pyrates and made Gallie-slaves; and now the loathsome prisons of *Oxford* and other places are filled with their miserable, starved, diseased bodies, who some of them would think themselves halfe free-men were they Turkish Gallie-slaves; such is their cruell usage. Know You not how our Lands I've untilled, while Your Souldiers take our bodies by a thousand at a time? and what can follow this but extreme famine? Know You not how our bloud is spilt, & the dead bodies of Your Subjects, yea, many of your Nobles scattered as dung on the face of the earth? Have not your eyes seene it, & your eares heard the groanes of the wounded, gasping for life? Is all this nothing to your eyes? To whom should your people goe but to your Majesty, in this our distress? We have tryed all other known means, and professe in the sight of God, we know none but your Majestie, under God, that can deliver us without more bloud and desolation; and the world knows it is in your hands, you may doe it if you will; and doe it early, and doe it with increase of your Honour, safety, and happines. What if it were to part with something of your right, yet should not your Majesty doe it to save the life of your people, from whom, and for whose good, You first received it?

Dryden Secretary. We beseech You consider what hath your Parliament and people done, that deserves all this from You? Is it because your Parliament relieved us from oppressing Courts, and illegal taxation? Was it not with your own consent and is it not your glory, to be King of a rich and free people? Is it because they prosecute Delinquents? Why, to what end are your Courts of Justice else, and are not they your chiefest Court? And can those be friends to You, and worth the defending, that are enemies to your Kingdoms? For your Forts and Navy, are they not yours for your Kingdoms? And is not your Parliament, the Kingdoms representative? Can your Majesty cannot mannage them in your own person, by your Ministers, and those chosen by Counsell; and can You

or the Kingdome possibly judge any more able, impartiall, and faithfull to advise You in this, then your Parliament: They medled not with it, till absolute necessity constrained; till they saw *Ireland* in rebellion, the rebells threatening *England*, the same spirits as malignant and active at home, and their own lives and the Kingdome in present apparent jeopardy, and your Majesties consent to their Bill denyed. We cannot but see the same Counsellors setting your Majesty against your Parliament now, which caused their so long discontinuance, which caused the Ship-money, and other illegall taxations, which caused the late innovations in Church and State, which caused the warre with *Scotland*, which broke up the last Parliament, and caused that invective Declaration against them, in the very language of the present times. We cannot possibly conceive what your Parliament can do now to remedy any of these miseries: they humbly seek your royall consent in vaine; the offenders legally proceeded against are defended from them, yea those that your Majesty hath proclaimed such, that is denied them which is yielded to every the lowest court of Justice; they desire nothing more, then your presence and concurrence, and we know if humble Petitions or loyall affections would procure it, there would not have been so long a distance. Neither is there any visible means left, but either give up our states, liberties, lives & Religion to the dispose of your too-long tryed secret Council, and make your Majesties meere will the onely Law, and so betray their Countrey, and the trust committed to them; (which God forbid) or else defend us by the sword.

And for us your people, what have wee done that we are made a common spoyle? Would your Majesty desire us perfidiously to betray them whom we have trusted, and desert them that have been so faithfull to us, and to kill them whom wee have chosen to save us, and destroy those who are our selves representatively? Then should we be the disgrace of the *English* Nation, the reproach of our posteritie, the very shame of nature, and should presently expect some strange judgement of God, according to the strangeness of our offence. Its true, we are forced to take *Arms* against a *Cesare*, rather to save our throats from the violence of desperate persecution.

You; But we beseech You call not this bearing Arms against You; it may be against your will; but if any of your now followers be more respective of your royall authoritie established by Law, more truly tender of your person and honour then we; then let not God prosper our proceedings, but cause us to fall before them, and give us up into their hands: We are fallen upon by the cruell, and because we will not dye quietly & without resistance, we are accused as traytors and enemies to your Majesty. We beseech your Majesty, consider in the presence of God, if your own Father & King had run upon you with his drawne sword, whether would You have suffered death without resistance, or have taken the sword *pro tempore* out of his hand? and yet neither be averie to his honour & person, or his propriety in his weapon. Doth not nature teach us the preservation of our selves? will not the eyewinke without deliberation, and the smallest worning turne back, if you tread on it? And beside nature, we have frequent precedents in sacred Writ, for even more then defensive resistance of Transcendent Monarcke, 1 Sam. 14. 44. 45. 1 Sam. 23. 11, 12. 2 King, 1. 10. 12, 13. 2 Chron. 26. 18. 20. Dav. 6. 14. &c. But if all this were nothing, yet we know your Majesty hath passed an Act for the continuance of this Parliament: and sure that Act must needs meane a Parliament with its power and authoritie, and not the meere name and carke of a Parliament; Its not onely that they shall stay together in London, and doe nothing, or no more then another Court; but that they continue your chiefe Counsell, your chiefe Court, and have sole legislative power, which are your Parliaments peculiar properties: And if your Majesty hath enacted the continuance of a reall Parliament in its power, who seeth not that You have thereby joyned with them your royall authority, though not your person? Doth not your Majesty in your Expresses oft mention your selfe a part of the Parliament, and that the head without which the body cannot live? and is the Parliament valid without your authoritie? therefore if your Majesty may and have withdrawne from them your royall authority, you may and have broke your own Lawes; which we dare not consider so many solemne Protestations to maintaine and rule by your own Lawes: wherefore we hope your Majesty must needs discern

discerne that we fight not against You but for your known establish-
 authority in Parliament. And we hope your Majesty will not deny
 them to be your entire Parliament; for is the Act recalled whereby
 they were established? if not, how can they cease to be your Parlia-
 ment? neither let the fault be laid on part of them, for we all know
 the *Major* part hath the authority of the whole; and if it were the *ma-
 nor* part, why did not, or doth not the *Major* over-vote them? And
 we beseech your Majesty blame us not to thinke our Religion and all
 lyes at the stake, while we looke back by what a traine Popery had
 been almost brought upon us by that party, and see them still the
 chiefe in favour, and when so many Papists *English* and *foreign* are
 now in Armes against us, and know no one Papist in the Land that
 is not zealous in the cause. Wonder not, *Dread Sovereigne*, if we
 hardly beleeye that those come now to save us, who in 88. and the
 Powder Plot, would so cruelly have destroyed us: that Papists
 should be most zealous in fighting for the Protestant Religion, and
 Delinquents (proceeded against in Parliament,) should stand for
 the priviledges and Laws of the Parliament; that oppressing Mo-
 nopolists should fight for the Subjects liberties, seem all riddles and
 paradoxes to us. Blame us not, we beseech You, to feare, while we
 see no contradiction appeare to Mounfieur *de Chesnel* his Booke, sold
 openly for many yeares, not in *Paru* only, but in *London*, and read in
 Court, which records your Majesties Letter to the Pope, promising
 to venture Crowne and all to unite us to Rome againe.

Dread Sovereigne, many Princes have gone astray through strength
 of temptation, and after have been happy in repenting and returning.
 Oh that the Lord would make it your case, and glorifie his mercy
 to You and us, in making knowne to You the thing concerning our
 peace, and not his Justice in hardning You to destruction: that it may
 never be read in our Chronicle by the generations to come, that *En-
 gland* had a Prince who lived and dyed in seeking the desolation of
 his people, and the Church of God. Your Majesty knoweth there
 is a King & a Judge above You, before whom You must very soor-
 ly stand and give account of your Government; We desire to see
 the presence of that God, to thinke, and thinke seriously,

again how sad it will be, to have all this blood charged on your
 back; Can your Majesty thinke of this with comfort when You are
 dying? Can these Counsellors that now put you on, then bring You
 as safely off? Your Majesty may despise what we say, and cast away
 our reason, and tread downe your poore people and judge us your
 enemies, because we tell you the truth, and speake as dying men in
 the sorrow of our soules; but You cannot so put by Divine Justice,
 or quiet conscience at the last: As true as the Lord liveth, your Ma-
 jesty will one day know that Blasphemers, Papists, and flatterers are
 not your friends; but plaine dealers, who doe assure You, the way
 you take, tends to the utter mine and destruction of your Selfe and
 Kingdome. And can your heart endure, or can your hands be strong in
 the day the Lord will reckon with You for His people committed to
 your charge? Oh! suppose You now heard the blood of your peo-
 ple already spile, crying in your eares, and saw the many thousands
 yet living a life worse then death, lying in their sorrows at your feet,
 crying for pittie, help, oh King help, or we lose our liberties, Lawes,
 lives and Religion; help that your Selfe and Royall posteritie be
 not Princes of an impoverished desolate Nation: help as ever You
 would have God help You in the day of death and judgement, when
 your Selfe shall cry for helpe and pittie; help that deliverance come
 not some other way, while You & your Fathers house are destroyed.
 The Lord God of our hopes, who hath for our sinnes most justly af-
 flicted us in You, give your Majesty a discerning eye, a holy and ten-
 der heart, to yeeld to the Petition of your distressed Subjects, To re-
 turne to and concurre with your Parliaments; that God and man may for-
 ge your mistakings, and You may be the blessed Prince that ever
 reigned in our Land, the terror of your reall enemies, the joy of
 your people, and the glory of posteritie; Such shall be the daily and
 hearty prayers of

Your Majesty's & the whole Kings

most humble and dutifull Subjects, &c.

F I N I S.